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A COMPLEAT
VINDICATION

OF THE

Licenfes of the Stage,

FROM THE

Malicious and Scandalous ASPERSIONS

OF

Mr. *BROOKE*, Author of *GUSTAVUS VASA*.

WITH

A Propofal for making the Office of **LICENSER**
more Extensive and Effectual.

By an Impartial Hand.

L O N D O N :

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Licence of the Stage

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By an Imperial Mandate

LONDON

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A COMPLEAT
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Licensers of the Stage, &c.

IT is generally agreed by the Writers of all Parties, that few Crimes are equal, in their Degree of Guilt, to that of calumniating a good and gentle, or defending a wicked and oppressive Administration.

IT is therefore with the utmost Satisfaction of Mind, that I reflect how often I have employ'd my Pen in Vindication of the present Ministry, and their Dependents and Adherents, how often I have detected the specious Fallacies of the Advocates for Independence, how often I have softened the Obstinacy of Patriotism, and how often triumphed over the Clamour of Opposition.

I HAVE, indeed, observed but one Set of Men upon whom all my Arguments have been thrown away, which neither Flattery can draw to Compliance, not Threats reduce to Submission, and who have, notwithstanding all Expedients that either Invention or Experience could suggest, continued to exert their Abilities in a vigorous and constant Opposition of all our Measures.

THE unaccountable Behaviour of these Men, the enthusiastick Resolution with which, after a hundred successive Defeats, they still renewed their Attacks, the Spirit with which they continued to repeat their Arguments in the Senate, though they found a Majority determined to condemn them, and the Inflexibility with which they rejected all Offers of Places and Preferments at last excited my Curiosity so far, that I applied myself to enquire with great Diligence into the real Motives of their Conduct, and to discover what Principle it was that had Force to inspire such unextinguishable Zeal, and to animate such unwearied Efforts.

FOR this Reason I attempted to cultivate a nearer Acquaintance with some of the Chiefs of that Party, and imagined that it would be necessary for some
Time,

Time to dissemble my Sentiments that I might learn theirs.

DISSIMULATION to a true Politician is not difficult, and therefore I readily assumed the Character of a Proselyte, but found that their Principle of Action was no other, than that which they make no Scruple of avowing in the most publick Manner, notwithstanding the Contempt and Ridicule to which it every Day exposes them, and the Loss those Honours and Profits from which it excludes them.

THIS wild Passion, or Principle, is a kind of Faticism by which they distinguish those of their own Party, and which they look upon as a certain Indication of a great Mind. *We* have no Name for it *at Court*, but among themselves, they term it by a kind of *Cant-phrase*, A REGARD FOR POSTERITY.

THIS Passion seems to predominate in all their Conduct, to regulate every Action of their Lives, and Sentiment of their Minds; I have heard *L——* and *P——*, when they have made a vigorous Opposition, or blasted the Blossom of some ministerial Scheme, cry out, in the Height of their Exultations, *This will deserve the Thanks of Posterity!*

rity! And when their Adversaries, as it much more frequently falls out, have out-number'd and overthrown them, they will say with an Air of Revenge, and a kind of gloomy Triumph, *Posterity will curse you for this.*

IT is common among Men under the Influence of any kind of Frenzy, to believe that all the World has the same odd Notions that disorder their own Imaginations. Did these unhappy Men, these deluded Patriots, know how little we are concerned about Posterity, they would never attempt to fright us with their Curses, or tempt us to a Neglect of our own Interest by a Prospect of their Gratitude.

BUT so strong is their Infatuation, that they seem to have forgotten even the primary Law of Self-preservation, for they sacrifice without scruple every flattering Hope, every darling Enjoyment, and every Satisfaction of Life to this *ruling Passion*, and appear in every Step to consult not so much their own Advantage as that of *Posterity*.

Strange Delusion! that can confine all their Thoughts to a Race of Men whom they neither know, nor can know; from whom nothing is to be feared, nor any Thing expected; who cannot even
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bribe a special Jury, nor have so much as a single Riband to bestow.

THIS Fondness for Posterity is a kind of Madness which at *Rome* was once almost epidemical, and infected even the Women and the Children. It reigned there till the entire Destruction of *Carthage*, after which it began to be less general, and in a few Years afterwards a Remedy was discovered, by which it was almost entirely extinguished.

IN *England* it never prevailed in any such Degree, some few of the ancient Barons seem indeed to have been disorder'd by it, but the Contagion has been for the most part timely checked, and our Ladies have been generally free.

BUT there has been in every Age a Set of Men much admired and revered, who have affected to be always talking of Posterity, and have laid out their Lives upon the Composition of Poems for the Sake of being applauded by this imaginary Generation.

THE present Poets I reckon amongst the most inexorable Enemies of our most excellent Ministry, and much doubt whether any Method will effect the

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Cure

Cure of a Distemper which in this Class of Men may be termed not an accidental Disease, but a Defect in their original Frame and Constitution.

MR. *Brooke*, a Name I mention with all the Detestation suitable to my Character, could not forbear discovering this Depravity of his Mind in his very Prologue, which is filled with Sentiments so wild, and so much unheard of among those who frequent Levees and Courts, that I much doubt, whether the zealous Licenser proceeded any further in his Examination of his Performance.

He might easily perceive that a Man,
Who bade his moral Beam through every Age,

was too much a Bigot to exploded Notions, to compose a Play which he could license without manifest Hazard of his Office, a Hazard which no Man would incur untainted with the Love of Posterity.

We cannot therefore wonder that an Author, wholly possessed by this Passion, should vent his Resentment for the Licenser's just Refusal, in virulent Advertisements, insolent Complaints, and scurrilous Assertions of his Rights and Privileges, and proceed in Defiance of Authority to solícite a Subscription.

THIS

THIS Temper which I have been describing is almost always complicated with Ideas of the high Prerogatives of human Nature, of a sacred unalienable Birthright, which no Man has conferr'd upon us, and which neither Kings can take, nor Senates give away, which we may justly assert whenever and by whomsoever it is attacked, and which, if ever it should happen to be lost, we may take the first Opportunity to recover.

THE natural Consequence of these Chimeras is Contempt of Authority, and an Irreverence for any Superiority but what is founded upon Merit, and their Notions of Merit are very peculiar, for it is among them no great Proof of Merit to be wealthy and powerful, to wear a Garter or a Star, to command a Regiment or a Senate, to have the Ear of the Minister or of the King, or to possess any of those Virtues and Excellencies which among us intitle a Man to little less than Worship and Prostration.

WE may therefore easily conceive that Mr. *Brooke* thought himself intitled to be importunate for a License, because, in his own Opinion, he deserved one, and to complain thus loudly at the Repulse he met with.

His Complaints will have, I hope, but little Weight with the Publick, since the Opinions of the Sect in which he is enlisted are exposed and shown to be evidently and demonstrably opposite to that System of Subordination and Dependence to which we are indebted for the present Tranquillity of the Nation, and that Chearfulness and Readiness with which the two Houses concur in all our Designs.

I SHALL however, to silence him intirely, or at least to shew those of our Party, that he ought to be silent, consider singly every Instance of Hardship and Oppression which he has dared to publish in the Papers, and to publish in such a Manner that I hope no Man will condemn me for Want of Candour in becoming an Advocate for the Ministry, if I can consider his Advertisements as nothing less than AN APPEAL TO HIS COUNTRY.

LET me be forgiven if I cannot speak with Temper of such Insolence as this: Is a Man without Title, Pension, or Place, to suspect the Impartiality or the Judgment of those who are intrusted with the Administration of publick Affairs? Is he, when the Law is not strictly observed in Regard to him, to think himself *aggrieved*, to tell his Sentiments in
Print,

Print, assert his Claim to better Usage, and fly for Redress to another Tribunal?

If such Practices are permitted, I will not venture to foretell the Effects of them, the Ministry may soon be convinced that such Sufferers will find Compassion; and that it is safer not to bear hard upon them than to allow them to complain.

THE Power of Licensing in general, being firmly established by an Act of Parliament, our Poet has not attempted to call in Question, but contents himself with censuring the Manner in which it has been executed, so that I am not now engaged to assert the Licenser's Authority, but to defend his Conduct.

THE Poet seems to think himself aggrieved, because the Licenser kept his Tragedy in his Hands one and twenty Days, whereas the Law allows him to detain it only fourteen.

WHERE will the Insolence of the Malecontents end? Or how are such unreasonable Expectations possibly to be satisfied? Was it ever known that a Man exalted into a high Station dismissed a Suppliant in the Time limited by Law? Ought not Mr. Brooke to think himself happy that his Play was not detained

detained longer? If he had been kept a Year in
Suspense, what Redress could he have obtained? Let
the Poets remember when they appear before the
Licenſer, or his Deputy, that they ſtand at the Tri-
bunal from which there is no Appeal permitted,
and where nothing will ſo well become them as
Reverence and Submission.

MR. Brooke mentions in his Preface his Know-
ledge of the Laws of his own Country, had he ex-
tended his Enquiries to the Civil Law, he could have
found a full Juſtification of the Licenſer's Conduct,
Boni Judicis eſt ampliare ſuam auctoritatem.

It then it be the Buſineſs of a good Judge to
enlarge his Authority, was it not in the Licenſer
the utmoſt Clemency and Forbearance, to extend
fourteen Days only to twenty one.

I SUPPOSE this great Man's Inclination to per-
form at leaſt this Duty of a good Judge, is not queſ-
tioned by any, either of his Friends or Enemies, I
may therefore venture to hope that he will extend his
Power by proper Degrees, and that I ſhall live to ſee
a Malecontent Writer earneſtly ſoliciting for the Co-
py of a Play, which he had delivered to the Licenſer
twenty Years before.

I waited, says he, often on the Licenser, and with the utmost Importunity entreated an Answer. Let Mr. Brooke consider, whether that Importunity was not a sufficient Reason for the Disappointment. Let him reflect how much more decent it had been to have waited the Leisure of a great Man, than to have pressed upon him with repeated Petitions, and to have intruded upon those precious Moments which he has dedicated to the Service of his Country.

Mr. Brooke was doubtless led into this improper Manner of acting, by an erroneous Notion that the Grant of a License was not an Act of Favour but of Justice, a Mistake into which he could not have fallen, but from a supine Inattention to the Design of the Statute, which was only to bring Poets into Subjection and Dependence, not to encourage good Writers, but to discourage all.

THERE lies no Obligation upon the Licenser to grant his Sanction to a Play, however excellent, nor can Mr. Brooke demand any Reparation, whatever Applause his Performance may meet with.

ANOTHER Grievance is, that the Licenser assigned no Reason for his Refusal. This is a higher Strain of
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of Insolence than any of the former. Is it for a Poet to demand a Licenser's Reason for his Proceedings? Is he not rather to acquiesce in the Decision of Authority, and conclude that there are Reasons which he cannot comprehend?

UNHAPPY would it be for Men in Power, were they always obliged to publish the Motives of their Conduct. What is Power but the Liberty of acting without being accountable? The Advocates for the Licensing Act have alledged, that the Lord Chamberlain has always had Authority to prohibit the Representation of a Play for just Reasons. Why then did we call in all our Force to procure an Act of Parliament? Was it to enable him to do what he has always done, to confirm an Authority which no Man attempted to impair, or pretended to dispute; no certainly: Our Intention was to invest him with new Privileges, and to empower him to do that *without* Reason, which *with* Reason he could do before.

WE have found by long Experience, that to lie under a Necessity of assigning Reasons, is very troublesome, and that many an excellent Design has miscarried by the Loss of Time spent unnecessarily in examining Reasons.

ALWAYS

ALWAYS to call for Reasons, and always to reject them, shews a strange Degree of Perverseness, yet such is the daily Behaviour of our Adversaries, who have never yet been satisfied with any Reasons that have been offered by us.

THEY have made it their Practice to demand once a Year the Reasons for which we maintain a Standing Army.

ONE Year we told them that it was necessary, because all the Nations round us were involved in War; this had no Effect upon them, and therefore resolving to do our utmost for their Satisfaction, we told them the next Year that it was necessary, because all the Nations round us were at Peace.

THIS Reason finding no better Reception than the other, we had Recourse to our Apprehensions of an Invasion from the Pretender, of an Insurrection in Favour of *Gin*, and of a general Disaffection among the People.

BUT as they continue still impenetrable; and oblige us still to assign our annual Reasons, we shall spare no Endeavours to procure such as may be more satisfactory than any of the former.

THE Reason we once gave for building Barracks
was for fear of the Plague, and we intend next Year
to propose the Augmentation of our Troops for fear
of a Famine.

THE Committee, by which the Act for Licencing
the Stage was drawn up, had too long known
the Inconvenience of giving Reasons, and were too
well acquainted with the Characters of great Men,
to lay the Lord Chamberlain, or his Deputy, under
any such tormenting Obligation.

Yet lest Mr. Brooke should imagine that a License
was refused him without just Reasons, I shall conde-
scend to treat him with more Regard than he can
reasonably expect, and point out such Sentiments as
not only justly exposed him to that Refusal, but would
have provoked any Ministry less merciful than the
present to have inflicted some heavier Penalties upon
him.

HIS Prologue is filled with such Insinua-
tions as no Friend of our excellent Government can
read without Indignation and Abhorrence, and cannot
but be owned to be a proper Introduction to such
Scenes as seem designed to kindle in the Audience
a Flame of Opposition, Patriotism, publick Spirit,
and

and Independency, that Spirit which we have so long endeavoured to suppress, and which cannot be revived without the entire Subversion of all our Schemes.

THIS seditious Poet not content with making an open Attack upon us, by declaring in plain Terms, that he looks upon Freedom as the only Source of publick Happiness and national Security, has endeavoured with Subtlety, equal to his Malice, to make us suspicious of our firmest Friends, to infect our Consultations with Distrust, and to ruin us by disuniting us.

THIS indeed will not be easily effected, an Union founded upon Interest and cemented by Dependence is naturally lasting: But Confederacies which owe their Rise to Virtue or mere Conformity of Sentiments are quickly dissolved, since no Individual has any Thing either to hope or fear for himself, and publick Spirit is generally too weak to combat with private Passions.

THE Poet has, however, attempted to weaken our Combination by an artful and sly Assertion, which, if suffered to remain unconfuted, may operate by Degrees upon our Minds in the Days of Leisure and Retirement which are now approaching, and perhaps fill us with such Surmises as may at least very much embarrass our Affairs.

THE Law by which the *Swedes* justified their Opposition to the Incroachments of the King of *Denmark* he not only calls

Great Nature's Law, the Law within the Breast

But proceeds to tell us that it is

—Stamp'd by *Heav'n upon th' unletter'd Mind.*

By which he evidently intends to insinuate a Maxim which is, I hope, as false as it is pernicious, that Men are naturally fond of Liberty till those unborn Ideas and Desires are effaced by Literature.

THE Author, if he be not a Man mew'd up in his solitary Study and entirely unacquainted with the Conduct of the present Ministry, must know that we have hitherto acted upon different Principles. We have always regarded *Letters* as great Obstructions to our Scheme of Subordination, and are therefore, when we have heard of any Man remarkably *unletter'd*, carefully noted him down as the most proper Person for any Employments of Trust or Honour, and considered him as a Man in whom we could safely repose our most important Secrets.

FROM among the uneducated and *unletter'd* we have chosen not only our Embassadors and other Negotiators, but even our Journalists and Pamphleteers,

nor

nor have we had any Reason to change our Measures or to repent of the Confidence which we have placed in Ignorance.

ARE we now therefore to be told that this Law is
Stamp'd upon th' unletter'd Mind?

Are we to suspect our Place-men, our Pensions, our Generals, our Lawyers, our best Friends in both Houses, all our Adherents among the Atheists and Infidels, and our very Gazetteers, Clerks, and Court-pages, as Friends to Independency? Doubtless this is the Tendency of his Assertion; but we have known them too long to be thus imposed upon, the *unletter'd* have been our warmest and most constant Defenders, nor have we omitted any Thing to deserve their Favour, but have always endeavoured to raise their Reputation, extend their Influence, and encrease their Number.

IN his first Act he abounds with Sentiments very inconsistent with the Ends for which the Power of Licensing was granted; to enumerate them all would be to transcribe a great Part of his Play, a Task which I shall very willingly leave to others, who, tho' true Friends to the Government, are not inflamed with Zeal so fiery and impatient as mine, and therefore do not feel the same Emotions of Rage and Resentment at the Sight of those infamous Passages, in
which

which Venality and Dependance are represented as mean in themselves, and productive of Remorse and Infelicity.

ONE Line which ought, in my Opinion, to be erased from every Copy by a special Act of Parliament, is mentioned by *Anderson*, as pronounced by the Hero in his Sleep,

O Sweden, O my Country, yet I'll save thee.

This Line I have Reason to believe thrown out as a kind of a Watch-word for the opposing Faction, who, when they meet in their seditious Assemblies, have been observed to lay their Hands upon their Breasts; and cry out with great Vehemence of Accent,

O B——, O my Country, yet I'll save thee.

IN the second Scene he endeavours to fix Epithets of Contempt upon those Passions and Desires which have been always found most useful to the Ministry, and most opposite to the Spirit of Independency.

*Base Fear, the Laziness of Lust, gross Appetites,
These are the Ladders and the grow'ling Foot-stool
From whence the Tyrant rises ———
Secure and scepter'd in the Soul's Servility
He has debauched the Genius of our Country
And rides triumphant, while her captive Sons
Awnit his Nod, the filken Slaves of Pleasure,
Or fetter'd in their Fears. ———*

Thus

Thus is that decent Submission to our Superiors, and that proper Awe of Authority which we are taught in Courts, termed *base Fear* and the *Servility of the Soul*. Thus are those Gayeties and Enjoyments, those elegant Amusements, and lulling Pleasures which the Followers of a Court are blessed with; as the just Rewards of their Attendance and Submission, degraded to *Lust, Grossness, and Debauchery*. The Author ought to be told, that Courts are not to be mentioned with so little Ceremony, and that though Gallantries and Amours are admitted there, it is almost Treason to suppose them infected with *Debauchery or Lust*.

It is observable that when this hateful Writer has conceived any Thought of an uncommon Malignity, a Thought which tends in a more particular Manner to excite the Love of Liberty, animate the Heart of Patriotism, or degrade the Majesty of Kings, he takes Care to put it in the Mouth of his Hero, that it may be more forcibly impressed upon his Reader. Thus *Gustavus*, speaking of his Tatters, cries out,

Yes, my Arvida,
Beyond the Sweeping of the proudest Train
That shades a Monarch's Heel, I prize these Weeds,
For they are sacred to my Country's Freedom.

Here this abandoned Son of Liberty makes a full Discovery of his execrable Principles, the Tatters of
Gustavus,

Gustavus, the usual Dress of the Assertors of these Doctrines, are of more Divinity, because they are sacred to Freedom than the sumptuous and magnificent Robes of Regality itself. Such Sentiments are truly detestable, nor could any Thing be an Aggravation of the Author's Guilt, except his ludicrous Manner of mentioning a Monarch.

THE *Heel* of a Monarch, or even the Print of his *Heel* is a Thing too venerable and sacred to be treated with such Levity, and placed in Contrast with Rags and Poverty. He, that will speak contemptuously of the *Heel* of a Monarch, will, whenever he can with Security, speak contemptuously of his Head.

THESE are the most glaring Passages which have occur'd, in the Perusal of the first Pages; my Indignation will not suffer me to proceed farther, and I think much better of the Licenser, than to believe he went so far.

IN the few Remarks which I have set down, the Reader will easily observe that I have strained no Expression beyond its natural Import, and have divested myself of all Heat, Partiality, and Prejudice.

SO far therefore is Mr. *Brooke* from having received any hard or unwarrantable Treatment, that the

the Licenser has only acted in Pursuance of that Law to which he owes his Power, a Law which every Admirer of the Administration must own to be very necessary, and to have produced very salutary Effects.

I am indeed surpris'd that this great Office is not drawn out into a longer Series of Deputations, since it might afford a gainful and reputable Employment to a great Number of the Friends of the Government; and I should think instead of having immediate Recourse to the Deputy-licenser himself, it might be sufficient Honour for any Poet, except the Latinate, to stand bare-headed in the Presence of the Deputy of the Deputy's Deputy in the nineteenth Subordination.

Such a Number cannot but be thought necessary if we take into Consideration the great Work of drawing up an Index *Expurgatorius* to all the old Plays; which is, I hope, already undertaken, or if it has been hitherto unhappily neglected, I take this Opportunity to recommend.

THE Productions of our old Poets are crowded with Passages very unfit for the Ears of an *English* Audience, and which cannot be pronounced without irritating the Minds of the People.

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THIS

THIS Censure I do not confine to those Lines in which Liberty, natural Equality, wicked Ministers, deluded Kings, mean Arts of Negotiation, venal Senates, mercenary Troops, oppressive Officers, servile and exorbitant Taxes, universal Corruption, the Luxuries of a Court, the Miseries of the People, the Decline of Trade, or the Happiness of Independency are directly mentioned. These are such glaring Passages as cannot be suffered to pass without the most supine and criminal Negligence. I hope the Vigilance of the Licensers will extend to all such Speeches and Soliloquies as tend to recommend the Pleasures of Virtue, the Tranquillity of an uncorrupted Head, and the Satisfaction of conscious Innocence ; for though such Strokes as these do not appear to a common Eye to threaten any Danger to the Government, yet it is well known to more penetrating Observers that they have such Consequences as cannot be too diligently obviated, or too cautiously avoided.

A MAN, who becomes once enamoured of the Charms of Virtue, is apt to be very little concerned about the Acquisition of Wealth or Titles, and is therefore not easily induced to act in a Manner contrary to his real Sentiments, or to vote at the Word of Command, by contracting his Desires, and

and regulating his Appetites, he wants much less than other Men, and every one versed in the Arts of Government can tell; that Men are more easily influenced in Proportion as they are more necessitous.

THIS is not the only Reason why Virtue should not receive too much Countenance from a licensed Stage, her Admirers and Followers are not only naturally independent, but learn such an uniform and consistent Manner of speaking and acting, that they frequently by the mere Force of artless Honesty surmount all the Obstacles which Subtlety and Politicks can throw in their Way, and obtain their Ends in spite of the most profound and sagacious Ministry.

SUCH then are the Passages to be expunged by the Licensers: In many Parts indeed the Speeches will be imperfect, and the Action appear not regularly conducted, but the Poet Laureat may easily supply these Vacuities by inserting some of his own Verses in Praise of Wealth, Luxury, and Venality.

BUT alas! all those pernicious Sentiments which we shall banish from the Stage, will be veried from the Press, and more studiously read because they are prohibited?

I CANNOT but earnestly implore the Friends of the Government to leave no Art untry'd by which we may hope to succeed in our Design of extending the Power of the Licenser to the Press, and of making it criminal to publish any Thing without an *Impri-matur*.

How much would this single Law lighten the mighty Burden of State Affairs? With how much Security might our Ministers enjoy their Honours, their Places, their Reputations, and their Admirers, could they once suppress those malicious Invectives which are at present so industriously propagated, and so eagerly read, could they hinder any Arguments but their own from coming to the Ears of the People, and stop effectually the Voice of Cavil and Enquiry.

I CANNOT but indulge myself a little while by dwelling on this pleasing Scene, and imagining those *Halcyon-days* in which no Politicks shall be read but those of the *Gazetteer*, nor any Poetry but that of the Laureat; when we shall hear of nothing but the successful Negotiations of our Ministers, and the great Actions of —

How

How much happier would this State be, than those perpetual Jealousies and Contentions which are inseparable from Knowledge and Liberty, and which have for many Years kept this Nation in perpetual Commotions.

BUT these are Times rather to be wished for than expected, for such is the Nature of our unquiet Countrymen, that if they are not admitted to the Knowledge of Affairs, they are always suspecting their Governors of Designs prejudicial to their Interest, they have not the least Notion of the pleasing Tranquillity of Ignorance, nor can be brought to imagine that they are kept in the Dark, lest too much Light should hurt their Eyes. They have long claimed a Right of directing their Superiors, and are exasperated at the least Mention of Secrets of State.

THIS Temper makes them very readily encourage any Writer or Printer, who, at the Hazard of his Life or Fortune, will give them any Information; and while this Humour prevails there never will be wanting some daring Adventurer who will write in Defence of Liberty, and some zealous or avaricious Printer who will disperse his Papers.

It has never yet been found that any Power, however vigilant or despotick, has been able to prevent the Publication of seditious Journals, Ballads, Essays and Dissertations, *Considerations on the present State of Affairs, and Enquiries into the Conduct of the Administration.*

YET I must confess, that considering the Success with which the present Ministry has hitherto proceeded in their Attempts to drive out of the World the old Prejudices of Patriotism and publick Spirit, I cannot but entertain some Hopes that what has been so often attempted by their Predecessors, is reserved to be accomplished by their superior Abilities.

IF I might presume to advise them upon this great Affair, I should dissuade them from any direct Attempt upon the Liberty of the Press, which is the Darling of the common People, and therefore cannot be attacked without immediate Danger. They may proceed by a more sure and silent Way, and attain the desired End without Noise, Detraction, or Opposition.

THERE are scatter'd over this Kingdom several little Seminaries in which the lower Ranks of People,
and

and the younger Sons of our Nobility and Gentry are taught, from their earliest Infancy, the pernicious Arts of Spelling and Reading, which they afterwards continue to practise very much to the Disturbance of their own Quiet, and the Interruption of ministerial Measures.

THESE Seminaries may, by an Act of Parliament, be at once suppressed, and that our Posterity be deprived of all Means of reviving this corrupt Method of Education, it may be made Felony to teach to read, without a License from the Lord Chamberlain.

THIS Expedient, which I hope will be carefully concealed from the Vulgar, must infallibly answer the great End proposed by it, and set the Power of the Court not only above the Insults of the Poets, but in a short Time above the Necessity of providing against them. The Licenser having his Authority thus extended will in Time enjoy the Title and the Salary [without the Trouble of exercising his Power, and the Nation will rest at length in Ignorance and Peace.

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